

A BEAR SHOULD KNOW  
BETTER...AND I DO #4,  
WINTER 2009/SPRING 2010



HE'S MY LUBBY-DUBBY-WUBBY...  
HE'S MY SUGAR-WUGAR-BUGAR...  
HE'S MY HONEY ALL-NIGHT LOVER...  
HE'S MY BABY, BABY, BABY, BABY  
CUB!

*(I WUV OO, MICHAEL - DA BIG BAD TIMMYBEAR)*

# A BEAR SHOULD KNOW BETTER. . .AND I DO #4, *WINTER 2009/SPRING 2010*

*(all content written, manipulated, stolen or given candy from a black van by Tim  
'Timmybear' Murphy; if you want to steal it in turn, at least tap me on the shoulder  
and tell me you're committing plagiarism - then I'll pretend I didn't hear...)*

- The Film That Time Forgot
- Woof, Eh? Or, Pole-Er Bears of the Canadian Variety
- Welcome To The Difficult Listening Hour
- Scurrilous, Insulting Image Manipulation/Decontextualization (I've Learned From *Fox News* - What Can I Say?)
- Safe As Houses
- Tips For Dining That May End Up In A Fine
- I'm A Poet, And I Was Not Even Cognizant Of That Fact
- Sensitivity Training Mandated For Death
- I Had The Stars On My Wall - Comic Beeeears!!
- Go To Hell - And Enjoy It!

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## THE FILM THAT TIME FORGOT

After countless years (okay, about 17) in limbo, this classic film, directed by *John Richard Allan* (aka *Johnny Noxzema* of *BIMBOX*, *DOUBLE BILL*, etc. fanzines), is about to be unleashed upon an unsuspecting and unvaccinated world.

The minds it will warp – the eyes it will scald – the ears it will tickle!

Think of it, if you must (and you must), as the unnatural love child of *Doris Wishman* (exploitation directrix supreme) and *Ed Wood* (who could really work the angora sweater), with midwifery by *Valerie Solanas* and *William Conrad*.

# THE FILM THAT TIME FORGOT

*PROJECT 36-C: Rude On The Moon!*

*STARRING*

*Caroline Azar  
Jena von Brucker  
AND  
G.B. Jones*

*CO-STARRING*

*Kevin Killian  
Sadie Benning  
Rachel Pepper  
Mark Ewert  
AND  
Jade Elektra*

*WITH*

*Davey Houle  
Jeffery Kennedy  
Johnny Ray Huston  
AND  
Lisa Freeman*

*FEATURING*

*Secret Gym Queens  
&  
Tex Testicle*

*INTRODUCING*

*Mike Thompson as 'Sherry-Ann Asante'*

*SPECIAL GUEST VOICES*

*Dionne D'Off  
Punk Marlbro  
Tim Murphy  
Michael Summers  
&  
Johnny Noxzema*

(yes, your humble cougar compiler and his cub consort have done  
'special guest voices' as Hysterical Faeries #1 and #2 – the roles  
for which we were born... ☺ )

# WOOF, EH? Or POLE-ER BEARS OF THE CANADIAN VARIETY



## *BRUNO GERUSSI (1928-1995)*

Star of *The Beachcombers* (1972-1991). He also did a celebrity cooking show AND was one of the first spokespersons for microwave ovens when they became generally available for home use in the late 1970s in Canada. What's not to love? On the aforementioned long-running series, he often wore a cub-beater shirt that exposed lots and lots of curly chest hair. Woofies for the young cub! ☺

WOOF, EH?  
Or  
POLE-ER BEARS OF THE  
CANADIAN VARIETY



*DAVID CLAYTON THOMAS (1941- )*

Lead singer of *Blood Sweat and Tears* – adorably bearish. Lends a whole new level of salacious meaning to “What goes up, must come down” from *Spinning Wheel*, one of their big hits.

WOOF, EH?  
Or  
POLE-ER BEARS OF THE  
CANADIAN VARIETY



*RAYMOND BURR (1917-1993)*

Not only was he woofy, but he was even ‘one of us’, sexually speaking, if, sadly, not very open about it.

# WOOF, EH? Or POLE-ER BEARS OF THE CANADIAN VARIETY



## *DAMIAN ABRAHAM (1979- )*

Lead singer of Canadian hardcore band *Fucked Up*, also works in the film industry. Prone to appearing on stage in various states of shirtlessness and sometimes even clotheslessness – to which, of course, his dedicated Bear following is entirely opposed. ;)

He is actually aware of his ursine admirers, and seems flattered if mildly confused by it (shades of *Kevin Smith*). This makes him sort of a Canadian *Richard Karn*, frightening an image as that may be. ;)

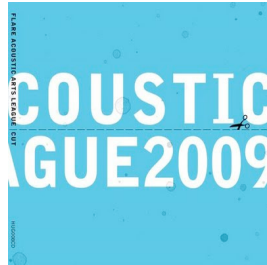
# WOOF, EH? Or POLE-ER BEARS OF THE CANADIAN VARIETY



## *MALCOLM INGRAM (1968- )*

Canadian director of *Small Town Gay Bar* (2006). Yes, the Bear relevance increases with each picture – this time the subject **IS** a Bear **AND** is ‘one of us’. **AND** he managed to get *Kevin Smith* to appear on the cover of *A Bear’s Life* in 2007 (and hopefully was responsible for educating that adorable, if only Canadian-by-obsession, woofer too, as now he no longer confuses cubs with twinks). Now, if only some lucky Bear could deal with *Kevin’s* ongoing fascination with blowjobs... ☺

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR



FLARE ACOUSTIC ARTS LEAGUE, *CUT* cd ([Affairs of the Heart](#) (Germany), 2009)

*Mr. LD Beghtol* has a long and illustrious career of writing catchy pop tunes about death, revenge and brooding romance, and, for that matter, singing similarly tinted songs from the pen of *Mr. Stephin Merritt*, and this record is, in some ways, a continuation of that theme, not to mention an extension of a tendency to name releases with such titles as *Hung* and *Bottom*.

This cd is most reminiscent of *Hung*, which was out on Darla some years back, not to mention his 7" *Back When You Wanted Me*, in being full of orchestrated pop just a touch akin to the works of the evil *Mr Spector*, *The Zombies* or *Love*.

It opens with the lovely swirling chamber pop of "Reminiscences of a Minnesota State Training School Alumnus, Class of 1905" (did I fail to mention a slight tendency towards lengthy names for his compositions?), which is inspired by the life of one [Carl Panzram](#), a serial killer who made even the usual lovely personalities grouped under that category seem like good-will ambassadors. You will find yourself singing along as the self-loathing for your susceptibility to cheery melody/dark lyric paradoxes sets in, and the lines 'even I can see that you're an awful lot like me' may just slip past you, to your detriment.

"Precis" and "Pull My Daisy Chain" both betray the author's fondness for literary references and wordplay, which, of course, endear them both to me.

Identity politics behooves me to dwell on "Ballad of Little Brown Bear" for a moment (and to point out that, though our friendly artist is a big bearded gent, he does not identify with that gay subculture of stocky, furry men who think themselves more masculine than the average queen ('masculine' is a camp pose in many ways too, but don't get me started)), not to mention that I used to play 'Little Brown Jug' in high school band (no, I was not a flautist), so the melody lingers in the recesses of my brain and was brought vengefully forward once more. A guest vocalist, *Mr Geoff Otis*, takes the lead on this in order to maintain the necessary ironic distance in this tale of alcoholic Bear love (unless he does identify with that cult, in which case, WOOF!).

"Luminary" features guest guitar from *Alan Sparhawk* of *Low*, which gives me some hope that he is NOT one of those evil Mormons who were such nasty meddlers on the Proposition 8 matter in California, but, even if I'm wrong, he still lends a minimal glow to the track.

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

"Love Finds Andy Warhol" has a whole host of cameo vocalists tossing in lines about who love finds (including the vaguely cringeworthy 'Love finds Arthur Lee' (ha ha)), and it is as close to a hopeful song about love as you are going to find here, despite lines about love not being a pretty picture and how it blinds them all.

If I were to try and find a target audience for this record (heaven forfend), I would think fans of *The Tindersticks* and *Morrissey* (up until about 1997 in the case of the latter) would enjoy this, as it is an elegantly arranged, layered, tuneful and ironically morbid masterpiece.

Fortunately, it is also available on iTunes, as it may prove rather difficult to find in North America (I had a friend in Britain send one over, before *Mr Beghtol* sent me a review copy – so I paid for this, as should you) and the label's webpage is STILL coming soon after goodness knows how long.



[ABSTRACT SKULLS](#), *Spungiforms* cd (originally released on cassette, ca. 1985; re-released 2009 by [EEEE EEEE Records](#))

*Band members: George Hinchliffe, Davy Walklett, Ian "Wig" Wood"; guests Sue Swift, Diz Willis*

You know that, in your darkest heart of hearts, you have often wondered: 'What would *The Residents* sound like if you took away their keyboards and gave them only some uncertain brass instrument, the occasional bass and guitar, but mostly what sounds like pots, pans, plates and cymbals, as well as equally ambiguous stringed instruments, possibly including violin, ukulele and banjo?' Ok, so the percussion would give you 'Land of A Thousand Dances' from THIRD REICH AND ROLL, but the rest would not be as easily squeezed into the conceit.

You might get something like this 10-song cassette, 9 of whose selections are quite challenging. Even free jazz/improv might be misleading, because, well, much of *Ornette Coleman's* work has passages of beauty and melody. There's not a lot of either here.

"Skarp Hedin's Axe" has some vaguely jazzy chords and figures on guitar and bass, and bears a vague resemblance to "Peter Gunn" as played by *The Shaggs*, but the clanging percussion and the sheer repetitiveness of the selection might tax some people's endurance. "42 West German Splints" is a little like *Ornette Coleman*, but in his trumpet playing (I think it's a trumpet) rather than saxophone, and the plinky string accompaniment on what is either a banjo or a ukulele is not exactly there to provide harmony under the vague swipes at melody the horn attempts. "Danse De Maquette" has a certain technique, as what is either a ukulele or a banjo is treated to both pizzicato plucking and the piece ends with a brief snatch of what sounds like tape-molested voice. "ESP" sounds like a slightly tamer cousin of "42" above. "Cavillato" actually is a LITTLE catchy,

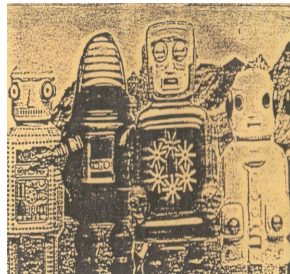
## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

as it has both sawed and pizzicato violin, but it meanders quite a bit. "Volgaboatpersons" is the most Residential here, as it takes the familiar tune (you would recognize it) and does unspeakable lurching things to it, and "Sprats" does much the same to a violin and thumping composition. "Dextra et Lamina" has squeaky noises that sound like doors or drawers, some more violin violence and another, longer, droning vocal tape insertion.

And then, suddenly...A TUNE!! "Hebden Bridge Suite" is recognizably these people, as the percussion is the same thump and splash, but the trumpet is playing a melody of sorts, the strumming ukulele or banjo is often providing a harmonic base and even the peculiar little guitar noises are not forbidding this time. It goes on for 17 minutes, though, which is where I suppose its "difficult listening" credentials are earned.

And back to the difficult listening. The similarly lengthy "Invisible Member (Ocean)" has more trumpet torture and a somewhat sophisticated but ear-testing base of unclear stringy noises.

An intriguing little collection. I do think you'd have to be in a very special mood to love it, but it is certainly a sign of creative minds, and you just know they're doing it on purpose, because there are signs of chops (much like a violin player on the streets of my town who has skills and fingering technique, but evidently either never learned to tune or is doing the Jandek thing of tuning to how he feels - in which case, get help... ;) ).



[FACE IN THE CROWD](#), *Sax and Drums and Rock and Roll* CD, orig. release 1985 on cassette, reissued in 2009 by [EEEE EEEE Records](#)

Factory Food  
Total Eclipse  
Dr Fizz..... Clown  
Face In The Crowd  
Face To The Name  
All Little Anarchists  
A Strong Voice  
How Much Do You Know ... Statement ... Justice

R. Loydell and Russell Kirk, plus "whoever else"

Take a little *Fall*, stir in *Glaxo Babies* (according to the label head – I've heard of the band, but don't really know them...) or *Jazz Butcher* (my reference point for anarchic music with saxophone), and you get this band.

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

“Factory Food” has a vaguely ska feel, but with louder guitars and less catchy vocals. Nevertheless, the song has a certain ramshackle charm in its rant about factory food (years ahead of the whole Frankenfood concern).

“Total Eclipse” continues the clipped guitars, earnest vocals and skronking saxophone of its predecessor, tossing in a power chord or two for maximum effect.

“Dr. Fizz” has a repeated vaguely spacey/metallic guitar riff, with a spoken word narrative a la the *Velvet Underground*’s “Lady Godiva’s Operation”. I am hard-pressed to make out most of the words, but the zany ping-ponging guitar and saxophone chaos are beautifully warped.

The track bearing their name (why do some bands insist on doing that?) has a catchy slide guitar loop to it, as well as some chugging rhythm guitar and, again, wacky sax.

“Face To The Name” also has an echoing metallic/spacey guitar thing going on, but the vocals are still sadly squished beneath the noise.

“All Little Anarchists” has the most punk-rocking structure, complete with 1-2-3-4’s and a vocal that is more forward, but still hard to make out. It is so brief that one feels it must be a bit of a piss-take, somehow...

“A Strong Voice”? Not really. I hear lots of guitar noise and drums, but the words might as well not be there.

“How Much Do You Know” – this time the bass, assuming it was present before, is more audible. Oddly, this sounds like “Forming” by The Germs, but without Darby’s undeniable vocal presence. It goes on at great length, into space-rock territory, in a way, and mercifully jettisons the vocals as a lost cause for most of that time.

In short, I like the music on this record, but the vocals really needed some sort of help or further amplification (it mostly sounds live-to-tape, other than possibly “Dr. Fizz”).



[Exploding Head Trick](#), s/t cd, orig. release 1989 on cassette, re-issued in 2009 by [EEEE EEEE Records](#)

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

**Jane Anfinson - violin**  
**Harry LeBlanc - keyboards**  
**Saroshi Shinozaki - guitar**  
**W Harper - bass**  
**Joe Miller – drums**

So far, these would be the pop stars on the EEEEEEEE roster. “Why So Much Hell” has lively complicated drumming, a super-catchy chorused and arpeggiated guitar and a pretty vocal a la *Joni Mitchell* (swooping and rangey) – could have stood to be mixed a bit higher to make the lyrics more comprehensible, though the wordless components of the vocal are keening and cut through. “Capsize Corsage” follows and makes us forget that, to some extent – the guitar squeals and feeds back and occasionally makes little squonky noises, and some guy is singing, a tad like a robotic *Adrian Belew* or maybe even those tracks by *Martha and the Muffins* that Mark sang on (hey, I’m Canadian!). “The Angel” continues the same pattern, complete with whammy bar attacks. “Lucky 7” returns to the land of tunefulness, complete with a somewhat eerie violin, jazzy guitar and burbling bass – it’s an instrumental – yes, it gets a bit busy, but it’s a GOOD busy. “Through No Power” returns to the female singer, who REALLY sounds like *Joni* here, and the melody is 80s *Joni*, complete with rhythmic twists and turns, clanging guitar and the nice winding violin again. “PKU” has ska hints winding through it, as well as the violin, so Camper Van Beethoven comes to mind, but devoid of country and most smart-ass tendencies – once again, no words. “The Solution” starts with gentle cymbal taps, tentative guitar, bass, keyboard and possibly violin sounds, then the female singer, and eventually a virtuoso violin attack – if you don’t like the beat on this one, be patient, because it will change. “Now I’m Grownup” combines a slightly detuned piano and organ sound with hyperactive drum rolls and a lyric about childhood/adulthood differences, and again has an off-beat/skanking component to its rhythm – it sounds like nothing so much as a highly caffeinated circus soundtrack. “Trial by Fire” brings on the sawing violin and a patient, broad piano sound, as well as the polyrhythmic drum attack (where is this drummer today?). “Take Me Home” is not the *John Denver* song, though it definitely has a fiddle on it and a passionate vocal. “Sneeze” finally brings on the full prog, complete with synthesizer solo, violin madness, instruments pushing in several directions at once, the assertive drums, the constantly shifting structure and, yes, some of the pomposity (just a little, though).

The notes on the website indicate this band was around from 1986 to 1993. It is just WRONG that this seems to be their only document...WRONG, I tell you...

# WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR



[HARRY ZANTEY](#), *Sleep*, orig. release 1981 on cassette, CD 2009 on [EEEEEEEEE Records](#)

*Harry Zantey* – EMS synth  
(one take, live, no overdubs)

*Mr. Zantey* was in the Australian band *Crime and the City Solution*, which, as the label owner notes, IS surprisingly under-represented on the 'Net. I remember seeing their albums around – they had four – they were on MUTE, for goodness sakes! Why is there so little data? (note: another member of the aforementioned ensemble was *Roland S. Howard*, perhaps more famous for *The Birthday Party*; he died at the end of December, 2009, by the way... ☹).

The EMS synth, by the way, has an interesting history. It is a fairly rare instrument, and its most loveable trait is that it seems to have a disturbed mind of its own. Hence its favoured status by *Pere Ubu*, I'm sure...

## **Sleep Part One (Some Snoring)**

It opens with a looping drone akin to, oh, *Kluster*, *Suicide* or *Silver Apples* and gradually gets very loud and obnoxious. With the squeals of feedback and white noise, it is not entirely unlike certain *PiL* tracks. All I can say is, if this is the sound of snoring, I am NOT sleeping next to this person...

## **Sleep Part Two (Sleep)**

Evidently a restless slumber. This time, the synth is a lot more lively, producing squealing waterfalls and scratched balloons of sound. There's a beat, or certainly a pulse, which sounds not entirely unlike someone trying to start a wet engine. Towards the end, the synth starts to sputter, so I guess it's getting sleepy...

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR



**SONS OF BITCHES**, *Death to Music* orig. release 1986 on cassette, reissued in 2009 on CD by [EEEEEEEEEE Records](#)

**Oblivion David Stomach - Vocals, guitar, etc**

**Elvis Khomeini - keyboards, backing vocals, bass**

**Brain Capacity, Ltd - percussion**

*In terms of future fame, it might be a bad idea to use pseudonyms on your cassette (1986). Of course, if you're from Providence, Rhode Island, it might be your idea of fun. Based on what friends have told me about this town, it might be the ONLY way to keep on living...but they could be wrong...I mean, I meet people who HATE the town in which I live, and I can't picture living much of anywhere else...*

### **Lyndon LaRouche Vs The Abominable Snowman (You Can't Put The Lunatic Back Into The Asylum)**

Cheesy coffee-drip beeping and blipping keyboards – growls – some right-wing radio guy rambling on, presumably Mr. LaRouche – then a roar and a rush, and it's over (I guess Abominable won).

### **Escape From You**

This track opens with a super wah-wah'ed sound of either a keyboard or a guitar (in either case, it sounds right out of the *Residents* catalogue), which is joined by a growling spoken word vocal which sounds ripped from the throat of the snarly *Mr. Skull* of that eyeball crew. It's sort of a romantic song, in which the narrator longs for a place where there's 'no syphilis to remind me of you'. Sweet, really...

# WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

## **Coprophagy**

A fuzzy sequenced keyboard pulse kicks things off here, right out of Suicide. Eventually, an equally distorted cheesy organ-type sound layers over that repeated throb. There seem to be some deeply buried vocals/vocal samples, but I can't make them out very well.

## **Slavelaborer**

Ooooh, synth pizzicato strings. The narration is a bizarre shaggy dog story about jock itch, Communism and slave labour in Siberia. There are odd twangy guitar sounds too, but nothing close to a hook. Towards the end, the guitar starts to sound more like a tennis racket being tortured, and still more odd radio/TV samples from the news. It is true, though – the sight of 15 to 20 men scratching their balls in Red Square WOULD be disconcerting...

## **Michael Jackson**

I'm not sure why this track is so named. More odd keyboard sounds and a severely distorted guitar (but not in a garage rock kind of way) and a peculiarly accented voice rambling on incoherently. Would not be out of place on THIRD REICH 'N' ROLL – interestingly, the final words of the song are also more or less found in a Girls On Fire track... (note: frighteningly, this review was written on June 21, 2009 – we all know what happened four days later – or do we?).

## **Gamelan Of Angry Housewives**

Another track in which terrible, unnatural things are done to keyboards, ranging from an electro-beat to chiming sounds to more wah-wah'ing. Pretty much a one-note piece, figuratively speaking, in terms of arrangement.

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

### **My Head Is My Only Home**

Much as with the previous track, it doesn't go much of anywhere. If it is true that the head of one of these individuals (assuming there really is more than one person behind this music) is his/her only home, then it must be a rather frightening abode...

### **Sick 'Em, Reverend**

Ah, mid-to-late-80s keyboard sounds. A repetitive clang that would not be out of place on a Deborah Harry record like 'Feel The Spin'. However, the growling and threatening 'Reverend' would probably not be hanging around the sort of clubs where this demented disco genre played – but perhaps he might...

### **Rhyme/Elements**

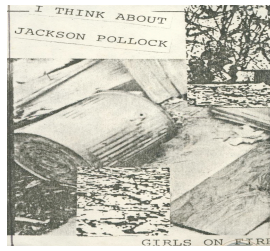
This track sounds as though it were one of the most laboured over on this cassette. A dense web of sound samples and vocal snippets over a keyboard bed. It is almost tuneful – but not quite.

## SOME GIRLS ON FIRE WANDER, NOT BY MISTAKE

[Girls On Fire](#), *Girls Who Grew Up To Be Arts Administrators*, from cassettes originally released 1983-1985, reissued on 5xcdr in 2009 by [EEEEEEEEEE Records](#)

(Brief background: *Leslie Singer* began her music career in Washington, DC, as part of an industrial band, *Psychodrama*, then fled to NYC (where she might have picked up a bit of the skronkiness in her sound) and from there to San Francisco (where, other than possibly a case of weirdness that rivaled *The Residents*, though sounding nothing like them, the town seemed to have little effect). She moved on from these '83-'85 cassettes to film, though she is evidently thinking of returning to music).

# WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR



## I THINK ABOUT JACKSON POLLOCK

This cassette (and now CD) contains seven lengthy pieces of guitar noise, distorted vocals and venomous poetry to rival *Lydia Lunch*, *Patti Smith* and *Kim Gordon* at their most nasty. Every song title begins with an 'I', but they do not appear to be direct personal confessionals, at least in terms of anything profoundly autobiographical (I would like to think so, anyway). Some of the vocals almost sound as though they were recorded at night under the covers on a portable cassette player, being very close-miked and sometimes unintelligible. The guitars – well, they're loud, tormented, seemingly attacked with various scratchy substances and, other than perhaps 'I Ride The Bus Everyday', which has, if not a hook, then at least a repeated bass-heavy guitar racket, they are not there to amuse you (well, perhaps they might, but you have one sick sense of humour if they do). 'I Saw A Car Crash' sounds like what *Taffy Davenport* might have made if she had been an art-punk rather than a destined-to-die-young Hare Krishna in *Female Trouble*. Not fun, but certainly unique and very forceful.

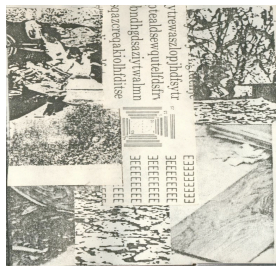


## IN MY BLOOD

This time, the pieces are a bit shorter (16 instead of 7). "Grace Kelly Never Used The Word 'Fuck'", in addition to being a wonderful title, begins to show the academic background of our heroine, as she chides the use of the phrase 'crazy and/or stupid' many times (and manages to

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

hold the naughty word for an alarmingly long time) – this time, there seems to be an electronic pulse of some sort, as well as bursts of static and what may or may not be ‘real’ percussion, so there is something approximating rhythm, though this is not a disco cassette. The repeated proclamation of the title line in ‘Here Comes Picasso’s Ghost’ almost qualifies as a hook, since she vocalizes it in a rather Ethel Mermanesque brassy style (far from tuneful, but certainly cutting through). “Underwear with No Holes” has an almost catchy beat, and is close to pop-tune length (not in sound). “Cat Vomit Punk House” revisits themes from earlier pieces over a sort of troubled guitar hook (think *Sonic Youth* rather than *The Beatles*). “The Almighty Beat” sees our chanteuse experimenting with harmonies (the operative term being ‘experiment’) for about two minutes – this time, I’m almost CERTAIN she’s doing multi-tracking like I did – from one cheap tape player to another, which she carries on into the “let’s hit many objects for a rhythm track” brief selection “The Sky Up In The Sky”. I’m pretty sure “Sick of Donuts” is a metaphor for the stultifying nature of labour under capitalism – because surely you could find SOMETHING to eat other than donuts – this is spoken word with some noises that may just be tape artifacts from the transfer to CD. “Skyscrapers Are Maternal” is actually funny, I think (if something falls from the universe, it will hit the tall building before us, so they protect us like our mothers – of course, at this stage in history, things hitting tall buildings have unpleasant associations...). “Ron Gilmore” has an almost locomotive beat to it, a la “Mind Train” by *Yoko* (though much less funky) – again, you won’t be able to dance to it... “Helen Schwab” is almost approaching pop music (in a Bizarro world, though), as it has a repeated tuned percussion figure and a, well, steady (if not accomplished) drum pattern – but her philosophy on life is, well, forbidding of air play. “Rotten Bananas” actually sounds like *Jandek*. Remember, I would consider this a good thing...you might not...



## CONFESSIONS OF A SHIT ADDICT

Alarmed by her own commercialism on the previous release, *Leslie* begins by tormenting us (and a live audience) with the screaming and static of “Dead Poets Don’t Shave Their

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

Heads” (it’s true, though) and “Camus’ Car Crash”. “My Calvins” is slightly less noisy, but the final sentiment is pretty ugly (I won’t spoil the surprise), and the sound doesn’t get any nicer with “Fassbinder Had A Good Set Designer”. Perhaps slightly contrite, she then does #1-#4 on slightly more obvious and more ‘straight’ guitar (perhaps courtesy of the guest guitarist, *Clara Lusardi*), revealing there is actually something approximating tune and structure to her art attack. Not to worry, though – “Mary Davis Kills” will make you forget that...



## DIARY OF A SHITEATER

Don’t be fooled by the similar title. This sounds nothing like the previous release. It sounds noisier. Her roots in industrial music are clearly in evidence. Lots of screaming, distorted and disembodied/echoed vocals; guitars being subjected to unnatural acts; use of what sounds like tapes, but might be a real person. The cassette listed no titles, and neither does the CD. It’s, well, like early *Half Japanese* (hint: this is not necessarily a compliment or an insult – more of a caution...).



## LIFE IS TOO FUNNY, I THINK I’LL SHOOT MYSELF

And so we reach the end of our little story. This one is definitely live, and the ode to

## WELCOME TO THE DIFFICULT LISTENING HOUR

“Jessica Savitch” almost has a catchy guitar hook, though the vocals are sadly buried.

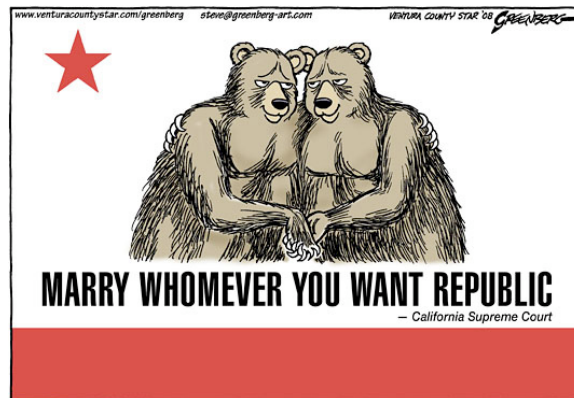
Remember, I think *Half Japanese* have hummable tunes, though... “My Groovy Apartment” is very *Jandek*, too, with big strummed dissonances and a sort of bluesy-from-Mars vocal approach. The untitled fourth track has a catchy syncopated rhythm, though the guitar tune is not ‘catchy’ to the presumed ‘you’ who is reading this, unless ‘you’ are, like me, *Jandek*’s #1 fan. “South of Market” is midnight humour about how to avoid getting raped in San Francisco. “Life Is Too Funny” calls to mind the ‘pop’ songs *Sonic Youth* did at the time – which is to say, there is an actual chord structure and some rough song arrangement, but it is far from, oh, *Flock of Seagulls*. It all concludes with the familiar shriek and guitar-murder of “Camus Crashing”. And so we have come full circle...and the Girls are still on Fire...

# **SCURRILOUS, INSULTING IMAGE MANIPULATION/ DECONTEXTUALIZATION (I'VE LEARNED FROM FOX NEWS - WHAT CAN I SAY?)**

**(1) YES, I KNOW I'M LATE, BUT AS AN IRRESPONSIBLE QUEER, I'VE NEVER FELT THE NEED TO ADHERE TO *YOUR* TIMETABLE (YOU KNOW, JUST LIKE YOU'VE NEVER FELT THE NEED TO ADHERE TO THE SUPREME COURT'S TIMELINES - MR. OBAMA? I'M LOOKING AT YOU...)**



***don't get your magic underwear in a bunch over this...***



***because we'll get married whether you like it or not. you have no power here ~ now begone, before someone...***

**SCURRILOUS, INSULTING IMAGE MANIPULATION/  
DECONTEXTUALIZATION (I'VE LEARNED FROM FOX  
NEWS - WHAT CAN I SAY?)**



***DROPS A HOUSE ON YOU (FROM INSIDE  
THE HOUSE, NO LESS)***

**SCURRILOUS, INSULTING IMAGE MANIPULATION/  
DECONTEXTUALIZATION (I'VE LEARNED FROM FOX  
NEWS - WHAT CAN I SAY?)**

**(2) ON THE TOPIC OF MR. OBAMA - WHEN YOUR OWN LEGAL TEAM SAYS EXTEND BENEFITS TO A FEDERAL EMPLOYEE, YOU DO IT. THESE PEOPLE WORK FOR YOU. WOULDN'T IT BE FUN IF YOU HAD A GAY SECRET SERVICE AGENT ASSIGNED TO YOU WHO SUDDENLY REALIZED HE WASN'T GETTING BENEFITS FOR WHICH HE PAID TAXES, WHILE HIS BREEDER BUDDIES *WERE*? I'M JUST SAYING...**



SARAH JANE MOORE, HETEROSEXUAL WOULD-BE  
ASSASSIN



"SQUEAKY" FROMME, HETEROSEXUAL WOULD-BE  
ASSASSIN



OLIVER SIPPLE, CIVILIAN, FORMER MARINE (DID SOMEONE MENTION "DON'T ASK, DON'T TELL"?), HOMOSEXUAL WHO SAVED GERALD FORD FROM BEING SHOT BY MOORE, 1975; ALSO VICTIM OF FAMILY ALIENATION DUE TO CHURCH DOCTRINE AND INTERFERENCE (CAN ANYONE SAY "MORMON CHURCH IN CALIFORNIA AROUND PROP 8"? I KNEW YOU COULD)

## SAFE AS HOUSES

Brandon Varnie had been feeling out-of-sorts since Thursday night, after returning late from an evening on the town, and his friends had become concerned by Saturday, as he had not come to work, called them or even checked his Facebook account.

However, this was not their only source of worry at the time, so it was actually Sunday evening before William got in touch with Brandon.

The sun was a faint sliver of blood on the horizon as the phone jangled next to the moaning, pale form that occupied the modest bungalow's couch.

"Hello?" Brandon muttered uncertainly, feeling as though something had crawled into his mouth and died. What HAD he done on Thursday night that was still in effect three days later? It was all a blur.

"Brandon!" William blurted. "Are you okay? Have you been watching the news?"

"No, and please don't yell. My head feels like it's going to explode."

"Sorry," William said, not at an appreciably lower volume. "Weird stuff is going down! They say it's vampires!"

"Vampires?" Brandon said, with as much sarcasm as he could muster. "And you're asking if I'M okay!?"

"Turn on the news, man," William bellowed again.

First Brandon stumbled over to close the curtains halfway, as the sun, in its dying throes, was hitting the screen of the TV at the right angle to make it unviewable. Then he switched it on.

## SAFE AS HOUSES

The news announcer had an expensive haircut, perfect teeth and a precisely coordinated shirt, jacket and tie, and, while shoes were not visible, they were certain to be blindingly buffed.

Already, Brandon was getting a sinking feeling. It had been his experience that, short of broadcasts from combat zones, the seriousness of a situation was in direct proportion to the sartorial splendor of the person commenting on it.

“It all began innocently enough on Wednesday night or early Thursday morning,” the bearer of bad news began. “A sheep found drained of blood in Laramie, Wyoming. Not unusual, you say? However, it was drained neatly through two small holes in its neck – not the work of any coyote or wolf previously known to science. And, inside the ranch-house, the farmer was found in a similar condition. And then reports began coming in from Little Rock, Arkansas; Waukegan, Illinois; Hamilton, Ontario, Canada; Ulan Bator, Mongolia. Similar incidents, though mostly involving humans rather than livestock. And now here...this time with video, shot by a cell-phone later found tossed in a trash compactor in a downtown alley.”

The image on the screen was grainy and jumpy. Still, it showed a rapidly moving person rushing towards the hapless victim, who was holding the phone at the time.

A shot of savage yellow teeth...and then darkness.

“Weird, huh?” William blurted, startling Brandon out of an odd sense of fascination. “There are other videos on the net, though some of those might be fake. Still, I’m not taking any chances, and even the cops are saying people should be careful.”

“Oddly,” the newsman continued, “there was no body found in the local attack. Just the phone with the video and a fair amount of blood at the scene.”

## SAFE AS HOUSES

“See?” William said, a faint edge of panic to his voice. “Not only vampires, but cannibals! It was all we could do to head out to your place yesterday, in broad daylight, and I had to bribe everyone with beer for a month to get them to help me.”

“What?” Brandon said. “Nobody came here yesterday.”

“Yes, we did,” William countered. “We called a bunch of times, but you didn’t answer. We knocked, and still nothing. So we figured we’d better just go ahead and do it. Maybe you were away, or sick, or...”

Brandon glanced out through the opening in the curtain, and noticed that his car was not in the driveway. Odd...

“Do what?” Brandon said.

“Well,” William said, sounding a bit sheepish. “You know Emil in Marketing? He’s from Romania, and, when all these weird reports came in, he called his mother back home, and she said...”

Brandon was still listening, but he couldn’t help but notice an odd aroma in the air. He had not been cooking, but he found himself vaguely thinking of pasta, with a certain lingering feeling of nausea.

“Well, she said to hang up garlic and sprinkle salt around the doors and put up crucifixes. We couldn’t get inside the house, of course, but we nailed a cross over your door outside and strung garlic around, and, well, this IS Minnesota, so we had salt in the trunk of the car, even at this time of year,” William blathered.

## SAFE AS HOUSES

“You...vandalized my home because you were worried about me?” Brandon said. “You shouldn’t have – really!”

William said, “Well, you’ll thank me when it keeps the vampires out!”

CLICK.

“Hello? William?!”

Brandon put the phone down and sat on the couch for a moment.

Playing the conversation back in his head, he supposed he may have been a bit harsh.

Knowing William, he would probably not answer the phone if he recognized the landline number on his house-phone display, so Brandon reached into his pocket for his cell-phone to call him back.

Hmmm. Where was it?

Those darned tiny things, Brandon grouched to himself. You can lose them anywhere.

After a few minutes of lifting the cushions and looking around the small living room, Brandon gave up. He would give William some time to cool off and call him back.

Meanwhile, where had he parked the car? Maybe he’d actually pulled it all the way up the driveway, as there was a blind spot through which he couldn’t see it via the bay windows. Had he left it at the bar the other night and got home some other way?

## SAFE AS HOUSES

Given that it was starting to get dark out now, he grabbed his keys, glanced outside to make sure the coast was clear (oh, god, was he actually starting to BELIEVE this malarkey!?) and headed out.

Or tried. When he picked himself up off the floor, he initially thought he had slipped, but there didn't seem to be anything there that could have accounted for it. Perhaps he was still a bit weak from whatever had laid him out for the past few days, but he was actually feeling fairly energized now.

And then he looked at his hand, and noticed the deep white scar on it. A scar which, were he either more imaginative or religious, he would have sworn resembled a crucifix.

Nonsense.

He grasped the doorknob firmly and managed to get the stubborn lock undone.

When he regained consciousness, it was fully night, and he was famished. Judging from the clock, which he could see with surprising clarity in the gloom of the unlit house, he had lost two hours.

He went back over to the couch and sat down for a moment, trying to ignore the insistent wolf which had taken up residence in his stomach and was growling with peeved determination.

Well, it seemed there was only one thing to do. He thought for a moment, and then picked up the phone.

"Hello, William? Yes, I know – I'm sorry about that. Look, we need to talk. I know it's dark out, but I need to see you. I know you can get right from your house to your car, so you

## **SAFE AS HOUSES**

don't need to worry about...those vampires you keep talking about. No, I'm sure it's safe for you to get here. Something to drink? Yeah, I'm sure I have something to drink. Yeah, thanks. You can even stay here if you want. I have somewhere I can put you. No, you won't need that stuff – I mean, it's all over my house, thanks to you!”

And now there was nothing to do but wait. Brandon sat back and hummed a song from his college days – something about Bela Lugosi, as he recalled.

Soon, William would be there, and everything would be all right.

And the night pulsed in time to the music in his head.

# TIPS FOR DINING THAT MAY END UP IN A FINE



- (1) If the greeter/wait-staff/maitre(sse)-d/etc. actually says, "Walk this way" – do it.
- (2) If you are out for the evening with your carpet-munching comrades or pansy pals and there is an attempt to stage-manage the seating such that you are across the way from the opposite-sex person they are assuming is your date – get up and rearrange so that you are sitting next to your ACTUAL mate, preferably with a social-space-violating proximity.
- (3) Check out the washroom in the restaurant as soon as possible/polite. Is it up against the back wall of the building and not heated, such that the temperature in the winter is what it is outside? Bad idea. Is there a large stall with plenty of room for guests? Check mark. However, is there no easy view of the next stall to check for tapping feet? Take away the check mark. Is it possible to write information for assignments, create unrealistic anatomical drawings, etc.? Another mark of class (if the establishment took the steps of a mall near Toronto and has steel cubicles whose walls go down to the floor, it has ZERO class). One place I frequented actually had a chalkboard for those who felt they must leave messages. That was a nice touch, if likely to result in censorship.
- (4) Do the staff of the opposite sex (or, where applicable, someone of any gender with whom you are not currently enthralled) make a habit of brushing up against you and, when you assume you haven't left enough room for them to squeeze through, STILL do this? I had this happen in one restaurant, and I was tempted to say: 'See the guy across the table from me (this contradicts the earlier point, but it made sense, given that we were both left-handed and he was 6'7", so it would have been crowded)? Unless you have a dick as big as his, dear, nothing is going to happen. And, no, a dildo doesn't count.' Instead, I made a point of leaning in each time she came to the table. Anyway, unless we were meeting in the washroom, I don't generally go to restaurants to trick with the employees.

# I AM A POET, AND I WAS NOT EVEN COGNIZANT OF THAT FACT

Moon caresses the sleeping boy's thigh.

I do the same, and then some more too.

Can it be the heavens have given

Him to me ...to be their earthly force?

Am I worthy of this divine boon?

Each indication would seem to confirm.

Love is to do what the moon would too.





## SENSITIVITY TRAINING MANDATED FOR DEATH

Last year, death took away *Sky Saxon*, *Roy Disney* and *Oral Roberts*, all reasonably aged proponents of one form of entertainment or another. These are okay, if still doubtless traumatic to fans and family alike.

However, there seem to be a few glaring errors here. *Jack Rose*, acoustic guitarist, 38; *Vic Chesnutt*, singer-songwriter, 45; *Brittany Murphy*, 32, actress; *Roland S. Howard*, guitarist, 50; *James 'The Rev' Owen Sullivan*, drummer, 28 (at least he wasn't 27); and one could go on (I simply selected the December roster for the purposes of brevity).

2010 is not starting all that much better, with the death of *Jay Reatard*, a few months short of his thirtieth birthday.

Clearly, someone has forgotten one of the guidelines from orientation; to wit, that most people are supposed to outlive their parents.

With that in mind, I am going to humbly suggest to the Grim Reaper that It consider the following make-cold-call list:

# SENSITIVITY TRAINING MANDATED FOR DEATH



- (1) *Bernie Madoff* – financial assassin, destroyer of so many lives. And he's already ill – you'd almost be doing him (and certainly us) a favour.

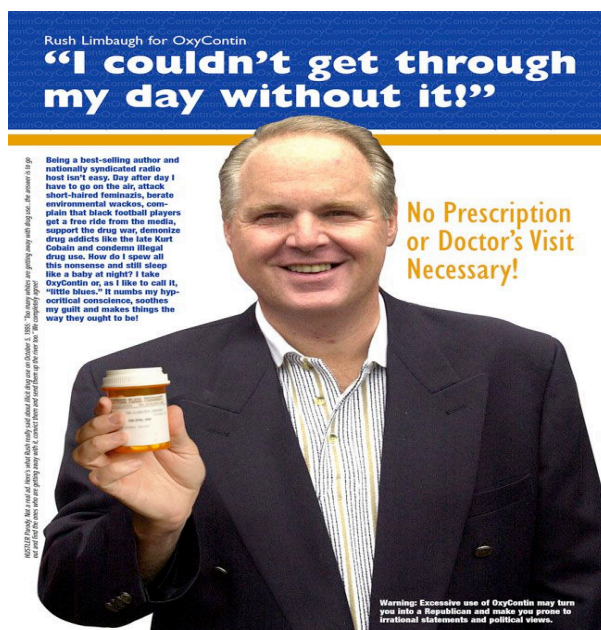


- (2) *Pat Robertson* – Because, really, does Haiti need ANOTHER punishment from God (yes, that would be sarcasm)? His list of crimes against/in the name of Christianity would take up pages. I shall simply say that I believe the New Testament pretty much says God is through with floods, earthquakes, terrorist acts, Republican presidencies (unless disguised as Democratic ones), etc. – in fact, I'm sure the Old Testament after the Flood promises He is. Anyway, what a way to encourage belief, if it were true. 'I smacked you, but now you can trust me.'

# SENSITIVITY TRAINING MANDATED FOR DEATH



(3) *Stephen Harper* – every time you prorogue Parliament, God kills a kitten. Let's do the old 'eye for an eye' thing.



(4) *Rush Limbaugh* – we're back to 'where do we begin?' Let us simply say that a pill-popping rich man has a lot of nerve criticizing Medicare and proposed health insurance modifications, and also that making yourself even more obnoxious than *Pat Robertson* is an achievement right up there with the Feeding of the 5000. At least the Revenant blamed Haiti's problems on an imaginary bogeyman – *Rush*, on the other hand, attributes sinister motives to human beings, the only people who CAN change things here on Earth.

# SENSITIVITY TRAINING MANDATED FOR DEATH



(5) *Ann Coulter* – It’s true that she’s been fairly quiet of late – perhaps she’s still quaking in fear after someone threw a loaded pie at her during one of her speeches (shame it wasn’t a fruit pie). However, all the better – a nice low-key death, without a dramatic deathbed speech in which she snidely attributes all the world’s ills to everyone left of *Adolf Hitler*. At least *Nancy Grace*, who gives her a run for the money, has become a mother, so it would be a little cruel to remove her right now. *Ann* doesn’t have that shield, to the best of my knowledge.

I HAD THE STARS ON MY WALL - COMIC BEEEEEEARS!!

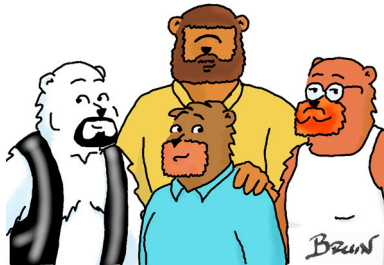
(my apologies to *THE FAST*, proto-queer/glam/punky band, & *DEBORAH HARRY*, who covered their song, for **THAT** PARAPHRASE OF "COMIC BOOKS")



(1) BLUR THE LINES, WHICH CAN BE FOUND AT

[WWW.BLUR-THE-LINES.COM](http://WWW.BLUR-THE-LINES.COM) — ACERBIC, NAUGHTY, AND WITH A CHASER AND A CHUB (THE CHASER EVEN HAS A MOHAWK OF SORTS — EVERY BOX CHECKED OFF (AS IT WERE))

**Bear** With Me



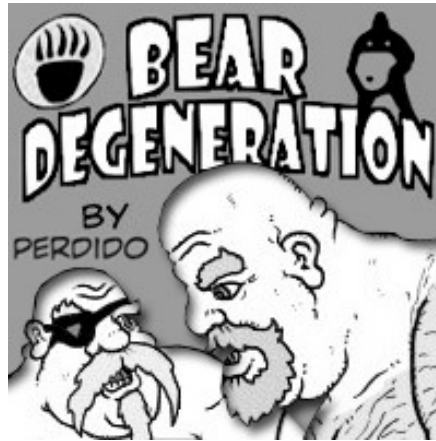
(2) BEAR WITH ME, AT [WWW.BEARWITHME.US](http://WWW.BEARWITHME.US) — A LONG RUNNING SERIES FOLLOWING THE LIVES OF SEVERAL BEARS. A BIT OF A SOAP OPERA AT TIMES, BUT WHAT'S WRONG WITH THAT? TO PARAPHRASE THE *WHITE TRASH DEBUTANTES*: 'DON'T MESS WITH SUSAN WOOFY!' (MY GOD, BANDS ARE GOING TO KNOCK DOWN MY DOOR AND SMASH MY TURNTABLE IF I KEEP DOING THAT...)

I HAD THE STARS ON MY WALL - COMIC BEEEEEEARS!!



### (3) BECOMING BLIZZARD, AT

[WWW.BECOMINGBLIZZARD.COM](http://WWW.BECOMINGBLIZZARD.COM) – THIS ONE MIGHT BE SLIGHTLY CONTROVERSIAL, AS IT HAS ACTUALLY INCLUDED BOTH STRAIGHT BEARS AND LESBIAN BEARS (GASPI!), BUT IT'S ALSO NAUGHTY AND SUBTLY INTELLECTUAL/POP-CULTURE-SAVVY, WITHOUT BEING UNAPPROACHABLE. GLAD THE ARTIST IS DOING BETTER NOW...



### (4) BEAR DEGENERATION (ITALIAN AT

[WOOFLOG.BLOGSPOT.COM](http://WOOFLOG.BLOGSPOT.COM) ; ENGLISH AT [PLANETBEARS.COM/TAGS/PERDIDO/DEFAULT.ASPX](http://PLANETBEARS.COM/TAGS/PERDIDO/DEFAULT.ASPX) (FOLLOW THE HYPERLINKS ☺) – THIS LOOKS DECIDEDLY HARMFUL TO WESTERN CIVILIZATION IN BOTH ENGLISH AND ITALIAN; THEREFORE, I CANNOT RECOMMEND IT...HIGHLY ENOUGH.

# GO TO HELL – AND ENJOY IT!



- "I TRY TO HAVE ONE EVERY DAY." TANTALUS
- "WHAT FRESH HELL IS THIS?" DOROTHY PARKER
- "EVEN WITHOUT MY SPECIAL INGREDIENT, IT'S QUITE ADDICTIVE." DOCTOR JOHN PEMBERTON
- "ABANDON HOPE, ALL YE WHO OPEN ONE- HOPE OF FINDING ANYTHING BETTER, THAT IS." DANTE A.

AVAILABLE IN BRIMSTONE, LETHE, OUT-OF-REACH GRAPE, SMOKEY TORCH AND FREEDOM FLAVOR (FOR A LIMITED TIME)

**\*\*COMING SOON: DIET OF WORMS, 666 AND GROUND ZERO HELL COLA\*\***

HELL – AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME AROUND AT LAST. THE CHOICE OF THE LAST GENERATION. BECAUSE HELL HAS THE BEST FLAVOURS. BECAUSE THERE'S ONLY SO MUCH MINERAL WATER FROM HEAVEN YOU CAN STOMACH.